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Letter dated 27 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the forty-second monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The present letter covers the period from 23 February to 22 March 2017.

As before, the situation with regard to the destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic remains unchanged, with the destruction of three remaining sites yet to be verified by OPCW. The Director General, in his note to the OPCW Executive Council, affirms that the prevailing security situation continues to prevent safe access to these sites.

With respect to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent submissions, I note that, on 2 March 2017, the Director General submitted to the Executive Council a report on the work of the Declaration Assessment Team. In this regard, I further note that the Director General has sent an invitation to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to resume, in early May 2017, high-level consultations to address the unresolved issues related to the declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate the need for the Government to work with the OPCW Technical Secretariat with a view to resolving all outstanding issues.

The continuing use of toxic chemicals as weapons, as well as the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, imperils the long-established norm against such weapons. Their use is intolerable and impunity must be stopped by identifying and holding those responsible to account.

The OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic is continuing its efforts to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons, including through studying all available information relating to such allegations. As the Director General states in his note to the Executive Council, the fact-finding mission is currently preparing a report further to its investigation of four reported incidents of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. It also continues to investigate eight additional incidents of the use of chemical weapons, all of which have been recorded since the start of 2017.

Please recycle

The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism continued to build up its capacity. An investigations office has been reopened within the OPCW headquarters, and its work has commenced for the Mechanism. The Mechanism also continued its cooperation and coordination with OPCW, Member States and other stakeholders.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex to the letter dated 27 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme" prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the OPCW Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 February 2017 to 22 March 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of the Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet Üzümcü

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the forty-second monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 February 2017 to 22 March 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

   (a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. The security situation still continues to preclude safe access both for the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready to accept the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above ground facilities.

   (b) On 14 March 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its fortieth monthly report (EC-85/P/NAT.1, dated 13 March 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. In decision EC-81/DEC.4, the Council requested the Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), to continue its efforts, on an expedited basis, to verify the accuracy and completeness of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration and related disclosures, and to address the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies it identified in the "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC 81/HP/DG.1, dated 22 February 2016). The Council also requested the Director-General, in parallel with the efforts of the DAT, to report to the Council, at all future sessions, any unresolved issues regarding the Syrian declaration and related submissions.

9. In accordance with decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 and subparagraph 12(b) of decision EC-83/DEC.5, a Note by the Director-General entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-84/HP/DG.1, dated 2 March 2017), which summarises and presents an update on the

outstanding issues, was submitted to States Parties. The Council noted the report at its Eighty-Fourth Session.

10. As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Council at its Eighty-Fourth Session, an invitation was sent to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, and his delegation to resume high level consultations to address the unresolved issues related to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration. The consultations, proposed to take place in early May 2017, would be carried out on the basis of a matrix which summarises the issues pertaining to the Syrian declaration and was shared with the Syrian Arab Republic in January 2017. The Director-General will report to the Council on these consultations.

11. In accordance with paragraph 12 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, two reports on the status of implementation of that decision (EC-84/HP/DG.1 and EC-84/DG.25, dated 6 March 2017) were submitted to the States Parties. These reports were noted by the Council at its Eighty-Fourth Session.

12. As reported previously, the Syrian Arab Republic was notified on 19 January 2017 of a forthcoming inspection at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC), in accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5. On 27 January 2017, two days prior to the planned deployment, the Syrian Arab Republic contacted the Secretariat in order to postpone the inspection due to security concerns. As mentioned in report EC-84/DG.25, the Syrian Arab Republic subsequently indicated that the inspection could proceed; the first inspection has now been completed at both the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC. This first inspection took place from 26 February to 5 March 2017. Samples were taken by the inspection team and will be sent to OPCW designated laboratories for analysis. The Syrian National Authority has extended the necessary cooperation in the conduct of this mission.

13. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, regarding the inspections at those sites identified by the JIM in its third and fourth reports as involved in the weaponisation, storage, delivery, and use of toxic chemicals as weapons, the Secretariat will continue to monitor the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic through the United Nations Department of Safety and Security to determine whether security conditions permit inspections at the sites in question.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

14. The Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives from the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the Syrian Arab Republic, met in Beirut on 23 February 2017 to discuss the ongoing activities under the tripartite agreement between UNOPS, the OPCW, and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the contribution agreement between the OPCW and UNOPS. Amendments to these agreements to extend the support provided by UNOPS to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian

Arab Republic until the end of December 2017 are expected to be concluded soon.

15. As requested by the Council at its Seventy Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

16. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

17. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 9.7 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

18. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continued to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. On 8 March 2017, the Director-General provided an update with regard to the FFM's work to the Council at its Eighty-Fourth Session.

19. As reported previously, by letters dated 16 and 29 November 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic requested the FFM to investigate incidents reported to have occurred on 16 September, 31 October, 3 November, and 13 November 2016 in the area of Aleppo. During the reporting period, the FFM continued its work with a view to preparing a report, which will be finalised once additional information about unexploded ordnance and samples retrieved by a CBRN[1] team of the Russian Federation has been received and processed.

20. The FFM is also continuing its work to analyse incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons that were recorded both in 2016 and 2017.

21. The fifth report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), submitted to the United Nations Security Council on 13 February 2017 pursuant to its resolutions 2235 (2015) and 2319 (2016), was made available to States Parties upon receipt on 3 March 2017.

[1] CBRN = Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear.

Conclusion

The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4 and on the activities of the FFM, as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar, confirmation of the status of the two stationary above ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.